

for U.S. businesses and supported 7.4 million American jobs—including 152, 864 in my home state of Hawaii, and 873,000 in Congressman DREIER's home state of California.

This legislation will help to support and grow this important industry by making travel to the U.S. easier and more efficient for foreign travelers. Specifically, the bill contains several provisions aimed at increasing visitors from China, making visa processing more efficient, and giving the State Department necessary flexibility to manage the visa process more effectively.

It will also help to solidify and strengthen our relationship with one of our most important travel partners, Canada, and even includes provisions to help address the housing crisis.

China has the world's largest population—1.3 billion people—yet only 802,000 visitors travelled to the U.S. in 2010. These 802,000 visitors spent approximately \$5 billion in the U.S. during their stays, the seventh most spent in the U.S. by visitors from any country. Clearly, welcoming more visitors from China will benefit our economy and help to create jobs. In order to do this, the bill provides Chinese visitors that meet the appropriate security requirements with the ability to acquire five year, multiple-entry visitor visas.

The bill would also establish a pilot program that would allow the State Department to conduct visa interviews via videoconference. One of the key challenges for residents of these countries—like China, India, and Brazil—is the need to travel great distances to conduct in-person visa interviews. If successful, this pilot program will help to responsibly reduce wait times and effectively meet the demand for visas in countries with large rural populations.

The bill would also authorize the State Department to charge extra fees in order to expedite the processing of certain visas, and allow Customs and Border Protection to provide expedited visas for foreign dignitaries and other priority visitors. This can be especially important for international meetings, and events such as the Olympics. Finally, the VISIT Act will make changes to visa procedures for nation's that are working closely with the U.S. to combat terrorism.

The VISIT Act also allows the Administration to lower visa application fees during off-peak seasons to help incentivize applications when overall demand is low.

In addition to improving the visa processing system, and incentivizing travelers from untapped markets, the VISIT Act also includes provisions to encourage visitors from the U.S.'s top travel partner—Canada.

In 2010, the U.S. welcomed 20 million visitors from Canada. Those visitors spent over \$20 billion during their stays. The VISIT Act creates a "Canadian Retiree Visa" which allows Canadian citizens over 50 to apply for 240 day visas. These visas would need to be renewed every three years, and visa holders would have to meet all necessary security requirements, and be able to prove that they have accommodations for the duration of their stay.

Overall, the reforms included in this bill are a cost-effective, bipartisan approach to incentivizing job creation and supporting a critical U.S. industry. In fact, to date the Senate legislation has been endorsed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Travel Association, the American Hotel & Lodging Association, and the U.S. Olympic Committee.

I'm confident that there will be many other groups—from across the political spectrum—that will support these much needed reforms that Chairman DREIER and I are introducing today.

I look forward to working with all of my colleagues to see this measure passed.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF JAMES M. REDMOND OF THE HOSPITAL AND HEALTHSYSTEM ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and members of the Pennsylvania delegation (Mr. BRADY, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. KELLY, Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. THOMPSON, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. MARINO, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. CRITZ, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. DENT, Mr. PITTS, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PLATTS), I would like the following statement submitted for the RECORD.

I rise today to recognize the many years of outstanding service by James M. Redmond of the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Redmond has worked for The Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania for 36 years, serving the last 20 years as the Senior Vice President for Legislative Services. During his tenure, he has used his extensive knowledge about, and expertise in, the state legislative process to achieve balance and compromise in resolving essential health care policy issues.

Mr. Redmond's successes as an advocate for hospitals and health systems have been attributable to his hard work, persistence, and steadfast commitment and adherence to integrity and ethics. He has been a key participant in numerous initiatives that strengthened Pennsylvania's hospitals and greatly improved patient care, including the development of Pennsylvania's trauma system.

Mr. Redmond began his career in health care administration at the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center of Pennsylvania State University. He is a graduate of the University of Connecticut, with a degree in pharmacy, and a graduate of the University of Florida with a Master of Business Administration. A Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, Mr. Redmond is also the author of numerous articles and reports on health care policy, and he has served on several state and national advisory groups.

During his distinguished 36 years with the Association, Mr. Redmond has repeatedly proven himself to be one of the Commonwealth's most respected advocates and health care leaders and we, as the Commonwealth's delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives, wish him health and happiness in his retirement.

HONORING MAYOR BENNY
MCGUIRE

HON. STEPHEN LEE FINCHER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. FINCHER. Mr. Speaker, great leaders govern with integrity, humility and with generosity to their community. In the Tennessee Eighth Congressional District, there is one leader whose efforts have been appreciated by his community and acknowledged by his peers. I rise today to congratulate the honorable Benny McGuire, as he begins his tenure of President over the Association of County Mayors of Tennessee.

A dedicated public servant, Mayor McGuire has not only contributed countless hours to Obion County, but he has set an example for other mayors to follow. Serving as the director of the Antioch Cemetery Association in Hornbeak, he also works as a chair of the Northwest Tennessee Development District and serves as a member on numerous local boards and committees. After only two terms as mayor of Obion County, he was selected by his peers to be named President of the Association of County Mayors of Tennessee, the statewide organization representing 95 county mayors and executives.

I value the great work and dedication that individuals like Mayor McGuire contribute to the West Tennessee area. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mayor Benny McGuire as he extends his dedication and devotion to the people of Obion County as well as all of Tennessee.

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ELKS LODGE #1243, IN CARBONDALE, ILLINOIS

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the 100th anniversary of Elks Lodge #1243, in Carbondale, Illinois.

Carbondale Elks Lodge #1243 started with 81 charter members in 1911. The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks had begun just 43 years earlier in New York City. In these early years, those interested in starting a new lodge would petition an existing lodge for initiation. The list of names for the proposed Carbondale Lodge was sent to Murphysboro, Illinois Lodge #572 on May 10, 1911 and Carbondale Lodge #1243 was formed.

Through the years, Carbondale Elks Lodge #1243 has engaged in a number of programs to foster the Elks mission, "To promote and practice the four cardinal virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity; to promote the welfare and enhance the happiness of its members; to quicken the spirit of American Patriotism and cultivate good fellowship." Some current activities include organizing fund-raisers to benefit disabled and visually impaired children and holding an annual charity golf tournament.

Carbondale Elks Lodge #1243 has been a shining example of a fraternal organization